DAGOBERT,

KING OF THE FRANKS.

A Tragedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

JAMES MARCUS BABO.

BY

Benjamin Thompson, Esq.

London:

Printed by J. Cundee, Ivy Lane,

FOR VERNOR AND HOOD,

No. 31, POULTRY.

1800.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DAGOBERT, *lawful King of the Franks.*
CHILDEBERT, *Usurper of his Throne.*
GRIMBALD, *Father of Childebert, and Prime Minister of the Kingdom.*
CLOVIS, *a Knight related to Dagobert.*
GOMAR,
BRUNO,
RAGOND,
OSMAR,
CLODOMIR, } *Knights.*
OFFICER.
HERALD.

ADELGUNDA, *wife of Dagobert.*
ADA, *Daughter of Dagobert and Adelgunda.*

Knights—Soldiers—Populace, &c.

DAGOBERT.

ACT I.

Scene.—*A Square, in which a great Multitude is assembled.* Dagobert, *in the mean Habit of a Pilgrim, is sitting upon a Step at the Entrance of a House.*

Dagobert *surveying the Multitude.*

Dag. HOW wonderful! Not a single eye is turned towards me.—Were I a trumpeter of some silly exhibition, instead of a poor man, thousands would look at me.——I know not one person in this crowd, and yet there are doubtless many, whom I formerly knew.—Can an interval of ten years make so great an alteration in the features? How little, then, must I resemble King Dagobert, since distress and anguish have been my daily companions.—Alas! Must they be my companions in future, too?

[*Trumpets announce a* Herald's *approach. The crowd turns to the quarter from which the sound is heard.—Enter a* Herald, *accompanied by* Soldiers, *of whom one bears the royal banner.*]

Herald. Childebert the Second, King of the Franks, announces to his people that he will this day solemnize his marriage with the royal widow, Adelgunda. Be the day a day of joy! Long live the royal pair!

Some of the people. Long live King Childebert and Queen Adelgunda!—(*The* Herald *proceeds to another street—the crowd follows.*)

Dag. Damned be the worthless pair!

Gomar.—(*Approaches from the retiring crowd, and surveys* Dag.)—Dost thou not rejoice at thy monarch's nuptials?

Dag. I am a foreigner.

Gom. Whence art thou come?

Dag. From Rome.—I have been a miserable sinner, and for the sake of gain once entered into the service of the Saxon heathens. With them I burnt and plundered many a cloister—many a church—'till Heaven at length taught me to repent. I journeyed to Ireland in hopes that the pious bishop Wilfried would grant me absolution, but he sent me to Rome. I promised to deliver his greeting to some knights here, and for that purpose travel through this country on my return to Ireland.

Gom. To Ireland, say'st thou?

Dag. Yes.

Gom. To whom dost thou bring greeting? from the pious bishop Wilfried?

Dag. To Clovis and one Gomar.

Gom. Dost thou know them?

Dag. I know the former. He gave me a friendly welcome last night when I arrived. The other has only resided here five years—him I do not know.

Gom. I am he.

Dag. You!

Gom. Yes. I am Gomar.

Dag. That is possible. If it be true, expect me here. I shall soon return.

Gom. Hold! Answer me a question. If thou dost answer it according to my wish, my house and home shall be thine, and thou shalt want no comfort in thy declining years—*(Looks suspiciously round.)*—Didst thou never hear that some time ago a monarch sat upon this throne, called Dagobert?

Dag. Undoubtedly, but—peace be to his soul—it must now be ten years since he died.

Gom. Didst thou hear nothing more of him in Ireland?

Dag. As I tell you, I heard that Dagobert was his name, and—

Gom. Not that he was alive?

Dag. How! Alive!

Gom. It is said that he lives with the pious Wilfried.

Dag. Indeed!—*(Aside.)*—Were this Gomar—but I dare not———

Gom. What mutter'st thou respecting Gomar?

Dag. I wish much to see him, that I may be enabled to proceed on my journey.

Gom. By heavens thou art the first who ever dared to doubt my name.

Dag. Pardon me, noble knight. I was not formerly suspicious, but many circumstances which I have witnessed during my pilgrimage have made me so. It is said, too, that many villainous transactions have taken place at this court. Be not incensed at the freedom of my speech. If

we knew each other, I might address you in a very different manner.

Gom. Thou art a strange man.

Dag. Strange indeed in this ragged mantle.

Gom. Come with me to my house. I will give thee a hearty welcome.

Dag. I thank you, knight, but my way lies through that street. Farewell.

Gom. Stay. There comes Clovis. Thou wilt now hear who I am. [Dag. *retires.*

Enter CLOVIS.

Clo. Oh Gomar, have I at last found you? Instantly accompany me. I will with a single word breathe fire into your every vein. [*Whispers in his ear.*

Gom. God of Heaven! Arrived!——Peace, friend. We are not alone. [*Points to* Dag.

Dag. Clovis, know'st thou thy guest?

Clo. Heavens! 'Tis he himself—my monarch.—How dare you—at such a time—in such a place—

Dag. Be at ease. Who will think of seeking the deceased Dagobert in this mean habit? Even the perfidy of my people, who could so soon forget me, is a security against all dangers. Who will interest himself about a beggar?—— Even now, a herald was here, proclaiming the adulterous union. Oh Clovis, his words appalled my soul like the curse of the Almighty.

Gom.—(Who has been lost in astonishment, throws himself at Dagobert's *feet.)*—Blest be the hour at which I am again allowed to see my king. Behold a faithful subject at your feet. In this bosom beats the heart of an honest Frank. Think not you are forgotten. Time and deception have clouded the recollection of you in the

minds of your people; but in every heart is lodged the thought that Dagobert is the last branch of the royal family. This thought will excite every one to noble deeds.—Let us rouse the latent spark.

Dag. That will we, by the Almighty. Rise, Frank, and come into the arms of a Frank.—*(Embraces him.)*—And now, friends, what think you of Adelgunda?—The faithless wretch!

Clo. Tyranny, and the artifice of Grimbald have compelled her to take this step. Often have I heard her bewail your death with floods of tears. Oh, if she knew you were alive—

Dag. To you my friends, as well as to her my fate was unknown. You were ignorant how I fell into the traitor's snare, how my subjects were deceived as to my death, and how vilely I was treated. You knew not that I was dragged by hired slaves into the remote desarts of Ireland, where I was doomed to undergo misery and want. No. You thought me dead, yet still remained faithful to your sovereign and justice. But she——To-day we shall see whether virtue, or a shameful attachment to Childebert and regal pomp will guide her actions. Friends, I fear my wife is lost,—for a faithful wife would sooner throw herself into the arms of death than the arms of an usurper.—To-day I must see her—to-day I must be convinced.

Clo. Yet hazard not too much.

Dag. He, who has lost every thing but life, can hazard nothing—for death is a blessing to him.

Gom. But he who has friends, has not lost every thing.

Dag.—(Buried in reflection.)—Are a king's friends real friends?

Clo. How!

Gom.—(Displeased.)—I love the man who deserves it, whether he be king or slave.

Dag.—*(Still in deep meditation.)*—Yes—see her I must—her and my Ada——this very day. Oh, if it be true, the tortures of the damned are exstacy compared to mine.

Clo. My liege!

Dag. Do you know me?

Gom. You are our king. We acknowledge no other.

Dag. Do not fancy that my senses are bewildered. No, my friends. I meant to ask whether you knew me in this habit.—Clovis, when I last night came to your house, you did not know me—nor did you, Gomar, recognize me to-day. You thought me a poor foreign pilgrim.—'Tis well. No one will discover who I am.—Go home, or elsewhere as your concerns may direct—but lay not your swords aside, nor sleep, for you might be suddenly awoke. In an hour go to the palace.——See, see! Some one comes hastily this way.

Gom. It is Clodomir.—Conceal yourself.

Clo. He has not perceived me. Withdraw with me.

Dag. I shall remain here.

Gom. Then are you lost. He is Grimbald's slave.

Dag. He cannot know me.

Clo. But he knows us to be disaffected men, as he terms it, and enemies to his master. The villain will become suspicious. Go, if you please. I will remain.

[*Both appear anxious and distressed.*

Enter CLODOMIR.

Clod. Well, knights, why thus solitary?—Come to the nuptial banquet at the palace.——*(To* Dag.)—Who art thou?

Dag. A poor man, whom Heaven has allowed to penetrate into the secret mysteries of futurity.

Clod. A soothsayer,—a sort of prophet, I suppose?

Dag. True—but not one of those, who are usually met with. My art has been acknowledged and admired in many countries.

Clod. Then you have been telling these knights a few truths, I suppose—and very unpleasant truths they must be, if I may judge by their looks.—You, Mr. Soothsayer, come with me to the palace. I'll make your fortune—but you must banish all serious matter, and prophecy nothing but happiness. Come.——*(To* Clo. *and* Gom.)—Will you go with us?

Clo. Clodomir, I shall not part with this stranger. I received him into my house, and hospitality demands that he should remain there.

Clod. Is he not safe in the palace?

Clo. He will be ridiculed.

Clod.—(To Dag.)—May we not joke with thee?

Dag. I am seriously inclined, but will accompany you. I may, perhaps, to-day afford some amusement to the courtiers.

Clod. There thou art right. Let the stars say what they will—but be merry, be merry—for no one wishes to be told that he will be sick to-morrow, or murdered the next day. If I were in thy place, I would prophecy that every one should have what he liked.—Dost thou understand me? But no. This requires penetration—and that is more than a black beard and tattered cloak. It requires a keen look like mine into the human heart.—But I am wasting time—though I am very fond of talking on subjects where skill and address are necessary. I feel at home on these subjects, as every one in the palace will tell you.—Go thither with me.—Clovis, I will be answerable for his safety.

Clo. That will I myself.—Come with me.—

[*Takes* Dagobert's *hand, and attempts to lead him away.*

Clod. Clovis you are too forward.

Clo. Clovis can never be too forward, when addressing Clodomir.

Dag. Contend not, knights, respecting me. Noble Clovis, I thank you for your hospitality —(*To* Clod.)—Come, lead me to the palace.

Clod. For ten years, Clovis, I have warned you to speak more temperately—yet you cannot. [*Exit with* Dag.

[Clo. *attempts to follow, but is detained by* Gom.]

Gom. Did you observe with what eagerness he availed himself of an apology for being admitted into the palace? His eye seemed to prognosticate some mighty deed. It beamed with lustre indescribable.

Clo. Gomar, he shall mount the throne of his ancestors, if my body be the first step to it. Heaven knows that my intentions are pure, and that royal favour is not my object. But shall Franks be any longer ruled with a rod of iron? Oh, Gomar, posterity will not believe that a man of spirit existed among us.—

Gom. Come, Clovis. Let us announce to our friends the banished king's return.

Clo. Right—then observe his every step in the palace—defend him—and die for him.

Gom. Or protect him, and live for Ada.

Clo. Gomar, what mean you?

Gom. Do you no longer love her?

Clo. Friend, the question is a dagger to my heart.——Oh Ada, Ada, thou art lost to me.

Gom. Lost, when you appear to have reached the goal of your wishes?

Clo. Lost, lost for ever.

Gom. Can Dagobert refuse to grant his friend and protector—

Clo. End not the question. Would not the world say that Clovis was interested in the restoration of Dagobert?

No. Never shall private advantage influence me. What I do for Dagobert, my conscience and my honour command me to do for my king.—No one can bestow upon me the hand of Ada, but Ada herself. Clovis cannot be a hireling, and accept a recompence for his actions.—But enough. Let us begone.—Our monarch's situation demands our instant attendance. [*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Scene.—*An Apartment in the Palace.*

Enter GRIMBALD *and* CHILDEBERT.

Gri. My son, I have, during ten years, looked forward to this day with fearful anxiety. Restless have been my nights—joyless my days.—Even the splendour of your crown did not gratify my sight, because it was not firmly fixed upon your brow. Every discontented look filled my mind with alarm. I trembled when I thought of Dagobert, for well I know he has friends in the kingdom. Cursed be Clodomir, for having persuaded me to spare his life.—But the hours of alarm are past. To-day joy returns to my bosom, for your union with Adelgunda secures to our race the succession to the throne.——My son, your gloomy look disappoints my expectation.

Chi. Oh my father, joy comes not always when wished for. How if our good fortune were eventually to prove the reverse.

Gri. Think not thus—*(Mildly)*—my king!

Chi. Of what avail is it that I am a king, while an imperious tyrant governs me.

Gri.—(In a threatening tone.)—Son!

Chi. I was speaking of my heart.

Gri. Oh that I had not implanted royal notions in your mind! You disgrace a diadem. I am the prop of your greatness, and my counsel supports you on the throne to

which my exertions raised you. Without me you would be—but no more of this.—Go, visit Adelgunda, and beg her to fix an hour for the solemnization of your nuptials.

Chi. Allow me a few moments—let me reflect—

Gri. Reflect! This conduct is absurd.

Chi. Absurd, indeed, to be dazzled by the splendour of a crown, and barter my peace of mind for regal pomp.—Be not angry, my father. Allow me for a moment to be really a king and to speak frankly. You told me that I should find happiness on the throne, whereas care has been my constant companion. I am the slave of a whole nation, and my smallest error is censured with severity by thousands. The world requires much of him, who steps forward from millions, and ventures on the government of millions.

Gri. Be you the king, and let the government rest with me.

Chi. And shall I for that title sacrifice my peace of mind —nay even be deprived of what most dignifies a king—the power of doing good?

Gri. Who deprives you of this?

Chi. In fact the power itself; for the oppressed sufferer is so far removed from the throne, that his complaints cannot reach the monarch's ear.

Gri. The meanest slave could not harbour notions more degraded. I have raised you so high that your shallow brain rocks. Fool that I was!

Enter CLODOMIR.

Clod. A trifling circumstance may be productive of essential benefit.

Gri. Why this remark?

Clod. You shall hear. It is evident how difficult it is to persuade the queen that her union with King Childebert

is proper. You know how she weeps, and talks of her dear Dagobert.

Chi. Is this all you have to say?

Clod. By no means, for what I have said is merely a prelude to what you shall now hear. I have remarked that all women have one weakness, and that is a sort of nervous susceptibility. An occurrence, to which a man would pay no attention, has often great effect upon a female mind.—I see you are impatient. I now come to the point. About an hour ago, as I was coming towards the palace, I met with a soothsayer, whom I have brought with me—a learned man, I assure you. He told me every circumstance that had happened to me since I lived at court. How if you were to introduce this man to the queen, and make him the vehicle of your wishes?

Gri. Right, Clodomir.—He must say that this union is the decree of Heaven.

Clod. Such was my idea.

Gri. That the welfare of the kingdom as well as her own demands it.

Clod. Certainly.

Chi. What a paltry artifice!

Gri. Thanks, Clodomir! Adelgunda's sorrow, whether real or assumed, will be thereby moderated. You must give the man proper instructions.

Clod. To make the matter more probable, some other person must consult this man in the presence of the queen. For instance, you, Grimbald. Consult him respecting yourself—

Gri. I—no—no—I don't wish that.—King Childebert, will you not go to Adelgunda?

Chi. Of course I must.— [*Exit.*

Gri. Hear me, Clodomir. I am by no means satisfied with my son's conduct. His mind is not superior to com-

mon prejudices. His heart is soft as wax.—A deed, which he condemns as infamous, appears to him, when exhibited in another light, worthy of imitation. Paint the phantom, which he calls Virtue, in gloomy colours, and he will fly from it as if it were Vice. His affection for me has restrained him from many a silly action.

Clod. Very good qualities for a king, who is under your direction.

Gri. Clodomir, ask this soothsayer—but you must not suppose I pay any regard to such things, for that would be ridiculous—yet—perhaps——ask him if Dagobert be dead. —I must own this idea now and then——Clodomir, you were the cause of my sparing his life.

Clod. I own it, and am sorry for it. I was then weak, and a foolish sensation of pity had a place in my bosom. But be at ease. Distance, and your firmly-seated power make it of little consequence whether he be dead or not.—What were you about to say of your son?

Gri. I fear that when Adelgunda becomes acquainted with his weaknesses—

Clod. At all events, then, my advice, if at one time bad, was at another good.—Did I not advise you to place the crown on your own head?

Gri. True. I ought to have done so.

Clod. And is it now too late?

Gri. Had I a younger son, he should be a godlike king. I would instil into his mind my firm and lofty sentiments.

Clod. And Childebert?

Gri. Childebert!—How can Clodomir ask such a question? Clodomir should be the first to answer it, were the case at hand.

Clod. I only wished to see whether you had arrived so far in state-policy that even your own son—

Gri. Peace!—Go and instruct the soothsayer.

Clod. Another word. You know my attachment to you, Grimbald.—I have just had a dispute with Clovis respecting this soothsayer, in the course of which he called me the cowardly slave of an infamous usurper.

Gri. Ha! That was aimed at me, and I will aim a deadly blow at him in return.—Cursed be the love of the people—cursed be his hypocritical and calm demeanour, which counteracts all my attempts to destroy him. But the vengeance of Grimbald awaits him—he shall not escape it.

Clod. Shall I do what you desired?

Gri. Yes.—(*Exit* Clod.)—He shall not escape it, if even Hell itself protect him.—Not one friend or relation of Dagobert will I spare. The sight of any one of them is torture to me.—How cheerful and delighted was I, when this morning dawned—yet now my mind is again oppressed.—But why?—What do I fear?—Damnation! I'll find repose even if I purchase it with streams of blood. [*Exit.*

SCENE.

The Queen's Anti-chamber. Enter DAGOBERT, *conducted by* CLODOMIR.

Dag. Are these the Queen's apartments?

Clod. They are. The King is with her.

Dag. Ha!—Childebert with her!

Clod. How can that concern thee?—Now hear what it is necessary thou shouldst know. Thou hast, without doubt, been told that Childebert is about to marry Adelgunda.

Dag. Happy may they be! They are worthy of each other.

Clod. Adelgunda is, nevertheless, sad, and incessantly laments the loss of her husband. For ten years have we urged every real and specious argument in favour of this union, but in vain. Yesterday we at length prevailed upon her to alter her resolution, though it is evident she does it more from despair than inclination. Thou shalt tell her that this alliance is decreed by Heaven—that the welfare of the state requires it, and so forth.—Thou knowest the influence which the declaration of a soothsayer has upon the mind of woman. Shouldst thou succeed so far as to allay her scruples and remove her sorrow, thou wilt have cause to recollect a monarch's gratitude throughout thy life.

Dag. It will not be difficult to dry her tears.

Clod. Think'st thou her sorrow is feigned?

Dag. Were it real, she never would have consented to become the wife of Childebert.

Clod. So thought I. Where is the woman, who, after a lapse of ten years, needs consolation for the loss of her husband!

Dag. True.

Clod. And such a handsome monarch as Childebert, might console many a one before the death of her husband.

Dag. Ha! Ha!—You are wise, I perceive.

Clod. And she had been married to Dagobert seven years when he died.

Dag. Died!

Clod.—*(Starts.)*—How! What mean'st thou?

Dag. —*(Aside.)*—I shall betray myself.

Clod. Is he, then, not dead?

Dag. Assuredly he is.—Pardon me.—I am always alarmed when I hear of death. I was many years absent from my native home. I was thought to be dead. My paternal inheritance was seized by others, and on my return, several people thought me a spectre, and died through alarm.

Clod. Man, there is something so dreadful in thy look—

Dag. You mock a poor pilgrim.

Clod. Thou art not a common soothsayer. Canst thou predict my future destiny?

Dag. The book of Fate is open to me.—Of thee nothing is written but "He was the confidential adviser of Grimbald, and therefore the abettor of his deeds."

Clod.—*(Aside.)*—He almost alarms me.——Canst thou not interpret this?

Dag. No. It is the will of the Almighty, that Dagobert shall do the rest. Were I to interpret the words of Fate, I must write them with thy heart's blood.

Clod.—*(Aside.)*—This man must be disposed of.—Hear me.—The Queen will soon be here. Come with me, and station thyself at the door, 'till I send Bruno, who will introduce thee to her. Thou hast not forgotten my instructions?

Dag. Forgetfulness is not one of my faults. I will do every thing in my power.

Clod. Come, then.

Enter ADELGUNDA *and* ADA.

Adel. Alas, my poor girl, the misfortunes of your mother destroy the pleasures which life would otherwise afford you. But try to be more cheerful. Look calmly into futurity, for you are free from my hard lot. Fate does not unite you to a man whom you abhor. Willingly, my Ada, would I have concealed my sorrows in my own bosom, but the time is arrived when I must disclose them to you.—While your noble father Dagobert was living, Grimbald already fixed his hopes upon the crown. My husband was young, and was too easily misled by Grimbald, whose counsel often caused rebellion. Old Clovis was your father's guardian angel. Often did he de-

scribe the treacherous conduct of the minister, but in vain. The villain had too firmly ingratiated himself, and when old Clovis fell in battle, he smiled with satisfaction, for he knew Grimbald had now no opponent—Dagobert no friend. All who were honest were dismissed from court, and fawning sycophants supplied their places.—When you were about six years of age, Dagobert permitted me to take you with me on a visit to my father.—Scarcely had we passed one day with him, ere a messenger announced to me my husband's death. We instantly returned, and found Childebert on the throne. Oh, my Ada, a dreadful suspicion took root in my soul. Every night my sleep was disturbed by horrid dreams, and the pale form of Dagobert appeared to me, claiming revenge on Grimbald and Childebert.

Ada. Revenge!

Adel. Oh, Ada, you are not yet acquainted with the villany of which mankind is capable.—Young Clovis was the last male branch of Dagobert's race. His claims to the crown were indisputable, yet Childebert still wears it. Clovis is hated and persecuted, and nothing but the love of a whole nation preserves his life.—And now, Ada, the usurper marries me, that I may protect him from your father's friends—from justice—from myself.

Ada. Will you bestow your hand for such a purpose?

Adel. My hand is all he requires—he shall have it, and then—but you are too young to comprehend the lofty project. Ada, thee will I behold upon the throne, and Clovis at thy side. The duty which I owe to the nation and to the blood of Dagobert, compels me to take this step.—Clovis is a man of magnanimity and honour. He is worthy of my daughter and the crown.

Ada. Oh, my mother! you shall not sacrifice your happiness to promote mine.

Adel. Shall Grimbald's house rule over Franks? Shall Dagobert's descendants obey?—Who comes there!

Enter BRUNO.

Bru. A man of most singular appearance requests an audience of your majesty.

Adel. What does he want?

Bru. I found him at the door, and as far as I could judge, he was in conversation with himself; soon as he espied me, he requested I would introduce him to your Majesty.

Adel. Conduct him hither.

Ada. I dare say it is the stranger, who came to the palace few hours since. He is a soothsayer.

Adel. We will hear what he has to say.

[Bruno *introduces* Dagobert, *who enters slowly and with his face half concealed.*]

Dag. Heaven bless you, gracious queen—and you fair princess!

Ada. How dreadful is the sound of his voice! Let him not proceed, dear mother.

Adel. Of what are you afraid? Be at ease.—You are a soothsayer, I understand?

Dag. I am.—*(Aside.)* The sight of her almost overpowers me.—*(Aloud.)*—My art has been acknowledged in many lands.

Adel. Do you know my future destiny?

Dag. Most perfectly. Let this knight withdraw (Adel. *gives a hint to* Bru. *who retires.)* Shall I proceed?

Adel. Do so.

Dag. 'Tis well. Then hear me.—Lovely are all the horrors of nature—lovely is the pestilence, which tears the hopeful youth from the arms of his old helpless father—lovely is death, when it overtakes the suckling on the cold bosom of

its dead mother—lovely is the tempest which rages through the ocean and swallows thousands—lovely are all the horrors of nature when compared to the heart of a woman, who has forsaken the path of virtue, and nourishes a sinful passion.

Ada. Oh! dearest mother, command him to be silent.

Adel. His raving concerns not us.—I desired you would disclose to me my destiny. Do so if you can, and speak mildly.

Dag. Require you mild and gentle terms of me?—No, wife of Dagobert, my words shall be thunderbolts to thy soul. Thou didst once wear the semblance of innocence,—from thy lips proceeded the words of virtue—thou wert to thy Dagobert every thing—he every thing to thee.—Thou didst vow to him eternal fidelity and love—and now art about to disgrace his memory by giving thy hand to an usurper—to the usurper who robbed thee of thy husband.

Adel. Hold!—Robbed me of my husband!

Dag. (Aside.) Oh, I can refrain no longer. *(Aloud.)* Robbed thee of *me*, Adelgunda.

Adel. You!

Dag. Woman, this dagger can wound none but the guilty. If Adelgunda be innocent, let her approach.

Adel. (Approaches him.) I am innocent.

Dag. (Throws his hat away and opens his mantle.) Adelgunda!

Adel. Gracious Heavens!—Oh! beloved shade, take me to thee.

Dag. Dost thou still love me?

Adel. For ever! For ever! *(Sinks senseless into his arms.)*

CLODOMIR *rushes in.*

Clod. Wretch, I have heard all.

Dag. Then hast thou heard too much. *(Stabs him.)* Report to hell who I am.

Clod. Help!—Oh!—*(Reels a few steps, falls, and expires.)*

*(*Adel. *sinks into the arms of* Ada, *who conducts her to a couch, and bathes her with tears.)*

Dag. (Kneels.) Just Judge of all mankind, thou knowest how free my bosom was from every murderous intention. The love of my people, of my wife, and of my child, have urged me to it. Grant me thy forgiveness, and guide me on the path, to which thy providence has led me.——Adelgunda, farewell——farewell, my Ada. Oh, I must press thee to my heart, should the traitors murder me in the act. What an hour of extacy and horror!—Give thy mother this kiss. I must fly. Farewell.

Ada. Oh, if you be indeed my father, assist my mother.

Dag. I am thy father—but pray to heaven for aid. I must fly. [*Exit.*

Adel. (Slowly raises herself, espies him as he leaves the room, and starts back.) There! There!

Ada. Oh, my mother, hear me.

Adel. Ada!

Ada. Your Ada is here.

Adel. How horrible! how horrible!—Where am I?—Why does his shade pursue me with that threatening look?——He drew his dagger against me.

Ada. Who, my mother, who?

Adel. A dreadful dream oppressed me. I saw thy father—he wanted to murder me.

Ada. Murder you! No, dear mother. He was kind towards you.

Adel. Kind! Did you see him too?

Ada. Surely I did. I saw him on his knees, praying to heaven—

Adel. Praying.

Ada. Yes, and then he pressed me close to his beating heart, and gave me a kiss for you.

Adel. And left me without saying farewell—me—his Adelgunda!

Ada. He kissed you, and wept over you, as you lay senseless on the couch.—But see, mother! There lies Clodomir, whom he killed.

Adel. Heavens! who killed him?

Ada. The man—my father.

Adel. I was not deceived then?—He lives—my Dagobert still lives.—Protect him, guardian angels!—But will he not, must he not, fall a victim to the tyrant? *(Espies* Grimbald) Oh God!

Enter GRIMBALD *and* BRUNO.

Gri. You start at my approach, queen, what a weight of sorrow hangs upon your brow! Why thus waste in sighs and lamentations the best part of your life? Is there on earth any thing, which has been denied you? Is not every one eager to anticipate your wishes?

Bru. (Espying Clod.) What do I see?—Clodomir murdered!

Gri. Murdered! Clodomir! My friend!—Who has been here? Haste, Bruno, try to discover the author of this bloody deed, and bring him hither instantly.—Queen, this disordered look—pardon me, if my just indignation leads me too

far—but on your gloomy brow I read——tell me, who murdered Clodomir?—You must know.

Adel. 'Twas I.

Gri. You!—Know you the consequence?—Who gave you power over his life?—But how can I for a moment think the gentle Adelgunda capable of such a deed!—Queen, I once more beseech you to confess who is the murderer.

Adel. He fell by the hand of his judge—who is thy judge also. [*Exeunt* Adel. *and* Ada.

Gri. (Looking after her with an astonished mien.) How can I solve these mysterious words?—She was the murderer!—'Tis well. If it be true, she shall pay dearly for the loss which I sustain.——*(Turns to* Clod.) Poor boy! Thou hadst raised thyself to my favour by a chain of crimes, and now————I did not wish to part with thee so soon, for thou wert certainly an useful slave. First should thy hand have dispatched Clovis, then mine had sent thee after him. But another instrument of vengeance may be found.—Guards! Bear that body away.

Enter BRUNO.

Bru. The murderer of Clodomir is in your power.

Gri. You are mistaken. Adelgunda herself inflicted the deadly blow.

Bru. She!—Impossible!—I have secured the assassin, and he will soon be here.

Gri. Who is he?

Bru. The soothsayer, whom Clodomir himself brought to the palace. I introduced him to the queen in this room by Clodomir's desire, and no one else had entered it. I found him with Clovis.

Gri. With Clovis!

Bru. Yes. I took some of the guards with me, who secured him. As soon as I accused him of the murder, he and Clovis turned pale, and both forgetting themselves, exclaimed: "We are lost." Clovis then attempted to deny the fact, but I declared that the queen had accused the soothsayer.

Gri. 'Tis well. Did you secure Clovis also?

Bru. My orders did not extend so far.

Gri. Is this the effect of my reliance on you? Was not treachery manifest? Is it not evident that the soothsayer is an assassin hired by Clovis—and that his dagger was directed against me—against the King? Bruno, as you value your life; let Clovis be secured.

Bru. I hasten—

Gri. Hold!—I have my reasons—you must bring Clovis hither by the most private way.—Now go.—(*Exit* Bru.)—It is evident that he intended the blow for me, and that this viper the Queen was privy to the plot.—Thanks be to Hell, for inspiring her with such an idea. Clodomir, thy death is of more service to me than was thy whole life.—She shall nor escape the lot my policy has fixed for her. To my son will I unite her—then may she weep 'till her sighs choke her. —And thou, Clovis!—We will see whether thou can'st escape me?

Enter DAGOBERT, *guarded.*

Gri. Ha! Art thou the murderer of Clodomir.

Dag. Punishment sooner or later overtakes every villain.

Gri. Who employed thee to do this?

Dag. God the avenger. His approbation is my reward.

Gri. Who art thou, wretch?

Dag. Who am I?—Oh, wert thou free as angels from every other crime, my name would be thy condemnation.

Gri.—*(Aside.)*—This voice thrills through my veins.——Does my coward heart deceive me?——By Heaven, I'll dive into the mystery.—*(Approaches* Dag.)—Thou miserable hireling, who—*(Starts back unable to proceed.)*—Ha!—Away with him!—Confine him in the deepest dungeon.—All your lives are answerable for his safety.

Dag. Once more, Grimbald, I assure thee that punishment sooner or later overtakes every villain. [*Exit guarded.*

Gri. Thee it shall soon overtake, by that Hell which sent thee.—*(Throws himself upon the couch.)*—How could I be thus alarmed? That courage, which nothing could hitherto appal, at once forsook me.—Is this the enjoyment of greatness so hardly earned—this the reward of daring enterprizes, sleepless nights, and years of anxious hope?—But of what need I be afraid? He will die as a murderer, and all who have recognized him, as his accomplices.——Childebert must know nothing of this——But Clovis comes. I must collect myself.

Enter BRUNO *and* CLOVIS *with guards.*

Bru. I have brought Clovis hither according to your command.

Gri. Knight, I must confess I never expected to find in you that base littleness of soul, which is capable of treason and assassination. But you see the hand of God protects the king.

Clo. I wish not to converse with thee.—I detest thee.

Gri. The consciousness of thy infamy binds thy tongue.

Clo. Peace, villain! Thy very looks declare thy infamy.

Gri. Audacious boy! Thou wishest by this defiance to shew thyself worthy of the death which awaits thee.—But let us converse calmly. Who is this expert regicide? Perhaps his own inclination led him to make the attempt. Perhaps you, Clovis, are innocent.

Clo.—(Attempts to snatch a sword from one of the guards.) —I should be worthy of Hell if I did not send thee thither.——Almighty God! Let thy thunder destroy this villain or me.

Gri. The sword of the executioner shall dispatch thee.—Bruno, confine him in a secure dungeon of the castle. Anon, you shall receive further orders from me.

Bru. Follow me. [*Exeunt* Bru. Clo. *and guards.*

Gri. Now, Fortune, aid me in the execution of the work, which, by thy assistance, I have so happily begun.

END OF ACT II.

ACT. III.

Scene.—*A Saloon. Enter* GOMAR, *conducted by an old Soldier.*

Gom. This, then, is Siegbert's saloon?

Sol. It is.

Gom. Let me not wait long, old man. Every moment of this day which is not actively employed is criminally employed.

Sol. Heaven bless you, noble knight!—But see, the Queen approaches. [*Exit.*

Enter ADELGUNDA.

Adel. It is so long since I beheld you, Gomar, that I scarcely recollect you. My eye is quite unused to the sight of worthy men. Welcome.—*(Presents her hand to him.)*—You live comfortably, I hope.

Gom. I live ever ready to sacrifice my existence for your welfare.

Adel. I thank you, faithful Gomar. You are not in your proper sphere. A camp was always more agreeable to your feelings than a court. You live retired, no doubt?

Gom. I do, gracious Queen—retired, unregarded,—by many despised. Yet—*(with energy)*—would it not be a disgrace to my honour and sentiments if I lived otherwise in these times?

Adel. You are the man I expected, Gomar, would remain. The times have not altered you.

Gom. In truth, as little as I have altered the times. When I have resolved on a particular journey, I do not turn and abandon my purpose, because the cold north wind blows in my face.—But may I request to know without delay why you have sent for me?

Adel.—*(Fearfully.)*—Does any thing of importance call you away?

Gom. Gracious lady, the most important in the world.

Adel. Oh, Gomar, and my petition—it concerns the life —oh

Gom.—*(With ardour.)*—Yes, Queen, it concerns your life—the life of my monarch and my friend—the welfare of a nation—my honour and my duty.

Adel. Gomar, you know, then—

Gom. All—that he is arrived—that treachery has obtained his imprisonment—that death awaits him.

Adel. How learnt you this?

Gom. I saw and conversed with him to-day, at the very time that the herald announced your nuptials through the city.

Adel. And did he hear the herald?

Gom. He did, and his firm mind sunk beneath the blow. It sounded to his ear like the curse of God upon the awful day of judgment. He instantly resolved to gain admittance into the palace, to see you, and cast a look into your heart. Providence directed his steps otherwise, and required his arm to punish that villain Clodomir.

Adel. No. Gomar. You do not know all. I too saw him. Clodomir surprized him in my arms, and he slew the villain that he might not be betrayed.

Gom. You saw him!

Adel. Oh, Gomar, I cannot describe to you how his look pierced to my soul. Joy and fear assailed my heart so violently that my senses fled.

Gom. But what will be the end of these preparations for the nuptial feast?

Adel.—*(Gives him a parchment.)*—Read that.—(Gom. *reads.)*—Oh God, thou didst inspire my soul with the thought—grant me strength to execute it, when the destined hour arrives.—(Gom. *has perused the parchment, and gazes at her with astonishment and admiration.)*—On what are you meditating?

Gom. Great woman!—Heaven will not allow the guilty to triumph, but—*(Pointing at the parchment.)*—your life is in evident danger.

Adel. Oh, let me fall, if he be saved.

Gom. Can I be said to save a man, if, in order to guard him against poison, I plunge a poinard in his heart? No, Queen, I cannot allow this.

Adel. Where will you find assistance?

Gom.—*(Shewing his sword.)*—Here. There are many, who will be ready to support our cause. Before the nobles of the land will I describe your virtues and exalted resolution. I will speak to them as becomes the man, who is speaking for his king and native land.

Adel. Oh may Heaven add strength to your words!

Gom. Doubt it not.—But one thing more would I know ere I leave the palace.

Adel. What is it?

Gom. I must speak to my monarch and to Clovis. Know you who guards the dungeon?

Adel. Alas! Gomar! I too have, for an hour, been devising means of gaining admittance to the dungeon. How if I were, in person, to request of Childebert an interview

with Clovis. If I beg this as his first favour to his bride, he will not deny it, especially as he has no suspicion but that my husband is a stranger—and a murderer. I know that Bruno was commanded by Grimbald to conduct the two prisoners towards evening into one dungeon.

Gom. Into *one* dungeon. There, then, it is intended to execute them.

Adel. Oh Gomar!

Gom. Believe me Grimbald has recognized him.

Adel. No, dear Gomar, he cannot have recognized him, or he would act otherwise towards me.

Gom. Be that as it may, we must attempt his rescue immediately.

Adel. Hark! I thought I heard some one.—Heavens! how much more had I to say!—But I must withdraw.—My friend, bear in mind the fate of your unfortunate monarch. Be the protector of virtue, and animate your friends—oh, could my tears accompany your words——Gomar, tell them that I thus implore their aid.—*(Kneeling.)*—Let me—let me—noble Gomar—Behold a weeping wife—oh, save, save my husband and to thee will I eternally acknowledge my obligations for happiness and life.

Gom.—(Raising her.)—Queen, you have filled my soul with anguish. Compose yourself. My zeal for your welfare and the welfare of my king cannot be inflamed? Am I not bound to exert every nerve by all that is most sacred to me?

Adel. Farewell, then, worthy man. May thy words be as irresistible, and thy deeds as successful as thy enterprize is great and noble. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Gom. Heaven be thanked for having sent us this angel in our distress!—*(Re-peruses the parchment.)*—Ha!—What must a man do in such a case.—*(Hears footsteps, and hastily conceals the parchment.)*

Enter BRUNO.

Bru. Ha! You really here, Gomar?

Gom. Yes, Bruno.

Bru. I thought I saw you in the court of the palace, and the sight was so extraordinary that I resolved to see whether it was true or not. I was looking for you—

Gom. And have found me here. Why, truly, Bruno, I myself scarcely know how I found my way hither. I believe ten years have elapsed since I was under this roof.

Bru. And for what reason are you come to-day. May I know it?

Gom. No.

Bru. Why?

Gom. Because you are a courtier.

Bru. Gomar, I know what this word implies, when you use it. I feel the reproach—but it is well that I have an opportunity of conversing with you. Why do you always treat me with mortifying contempt? I have often called at your house, but you had always instructed your servants not to admit me. This has hurt me. Why did you act thus towards me?

Gom. I was afraid that you might not agree with me as to the proper title of your king, in which case I should have set fire to my own house, which as much belongs to me as this palace—does *not* belong to your king.

Bru. I do not comprehend a word of this?

Gom. So much the better, for I said it a day too soon.—But why say more? Farewell.

Bru. Gomar, you shall not leave me with hatred or contempt. Hear me.—Do you think I am a courtier by choice? That am I not. You know that I was educated

by your father. He adopted me as his child, and was to me more than a father.—*(Much affected.)*—Many a tear do I shed when I recollect his kindness. My happiness and hopes were buried with him. Forsaken and without help, necessity compelled me to enter into the service of the great.

Gom. Forsaken and without help!

Bru. What recourse was open to me?

Gom. Recourse!—Bruno, what was my father's name?

Bru. Gomar.

Gom. And what is mine?

Bru.—(Starts.) —Oh, I understand you.—Generous man, how shall I thank you? Behold me at your feet.

[*Kneels.*

Gom. Shame on that courtier's attitude!—Degrade not human nature.—Why did you form so wrong an opinion of me as to fancy that I inherited nothing from my father but his name and property? Why did you leave my house? Was it not your home? Did I not call you my brother?

Bru.—(Rushes into his arms.)—Thank Heaven my heart once more beats against the bosom of a worthy man. I myself now feel better than I was. Farewell, splendid palace, thou grave of liberty, thou cradle of vice. Oh Gomar, I beseech you lead me away.

Gom. No, Bruno. You must remain here.

Bru. Remain!

Gom. The duty of a worthy man is to serve his native land and justice. Will you do this?

Bru. How humiliating is the question!

Gom. Stay where you are, then—and now tell me, where Clovis and the stranger who killed Clodomir are?

Bru. Both in prison.

Gom. Can you conduct me to them?

Bru. Gomar!

Gom. Can you do this, I say?

Bru. Dare I if I can?

Gom. How!

Bru. I have sworn to be faithful and silent. Should I be worthy of your friendship, if I—

Gom. To whom did you swear fidelity?—To an infamous traitor.—Yes, Bruno—why shall I check the sentiments of my overflowing heart? Why, like a slave, close my lips, and confine my tumultuous thoughts within this prison?—I tell thee, Bruno, thou hast combined with vice to oppose every thing great and noble under the sun. Thy oath is a crime. Among honest men oaths are unnecessary, and he who is not bound by an inward sensation of duty, will never be bound by a word. The villain, who required an oath of thee, thought thee a villain like himself, and if thou didst swear, thou—I am ashamed of finishing the sentence.

Bru. Did you come hither to insult me?

Gom. That I may not insult you, I will go.

Bru. Gomar—your virtues are surety that you require nothing of me which is wrong—I will conduct you to the prisoners.

Gom. When?

Bru. In two hours I shall bring them both into one dungeon.

Gom. I cannot come so soon. I do not know how long business may detain me with some friends.

Bru. You will find me ready at any time.

Gom. Enough! Farewell. I hear some one. [*Exit.*

Bru. I fear the warmth of grateful friendship has led me too far. Every thing to-day appears to me dark and mysterious, as if some great event were about to happen.—But what Gomar undertakes cannot——

Enter GRIMBALD.

Gri. Was nobody here just now?

Bru. Nobody.

Gri. Then it was a shadow which fled from the saloon.

Bru. I believe it was Gomar.

Gri. Gomar! What brought him hither? What, said he?

Bru. He withdrew as I entered.

Gri. I am sorry that I did not meet him. He is a worthy man.

Bru. He is indeed.

Gri. Did he not speak of Clovis?

Bru. To me he said nothing.

Gri. The King comes.—Go.—(*Exit* Bru.)—Oh that I could shake the weight of twenty years from me! Matters should then wear a very different appearance.

Enter CHILDEBERT.

Have you signed the sentence?

Chi. I cannot. Does not my duty require that I should hear the accused before I condemn?

Gri. Is not the crime sufficiently glaring? Is not my accusation of sufficient consequence? Must I prove the treachery of Clovis by challenging him to combat? — — Duty, say you? Is it not duty, then, to obey your father, and to follow his wiser counsel?

Chi. Tell me—am I a mere shadow or a being? Are you the king, and do I bear the empty name? Judge then—decide—murder—on your soul rest the sentence, not on mine. Is Clovis not a Frank?—The privileges of every Frank—

Gri. Instruct me at another time, sage legislator—at present answer me—shall Clovis die with the soothsayer?

Chi. Punish the latter as he deserves—but Clovis is a Frank. He must be heard, and if he be guilty, he shall also suffer.—

Gri. Guilty! He is guilty of high treason*. Witnesses are ready to prove it. Of course, therefore, he has no further privilege as a Frank.

Chi. Oh, I beseech you, my father, do not distress me to-day, the day of my marriage.

Gri. Does Adelgunda abide by her determination?

Chi. She does.

Gri.—*(Aside.)*—She has not recognized him, then.—Or does she perhaps—

Chi. But supposing she had altered her intention—

Gri. I should not have been surprised, for circumstances are altered so materially that—but believe me the foundation of her conduct was artifice. She wished by opposition to enhance the value of the sacrifice. Be assured pride or self-love is the strongest passion of which a woman is susceptible. Adelgunda has been a queen, and she will do any thing rather than cease to be a queen. Yet, if it be true that you have an utter aversion to this alliance, why, then—

Chi. What then, my father?

Gri. If I have thought your union with Adelgunda absolutely necessary, it was because I wished your throne and life to be protected from the power of Clovis. In the scale of our fortune nothing was wanting—but the destruction of that man.

* This was the only crime for which a Frank could be executed. Hence the scruples of Childebert.

Chi. Who, nevertheless, is not a villain, if I know him.

Gri. You know him! how is that possible, when you do not know yourself. Your eye is dimmed by prejudice, and is misled by the varnish, which most men draw over their characters. Age and experience will teach you the truth of my doctrine. The heart of man is the abode of vice. Virtue is but the mask which covers it. You will, therefore, never be happy and secure but by possessing power—you will never be powerful but by knowing the weaknesses of mankind. Learn the art of dissimulation. It serves to conceal your own defects, and pry into those of others. Never appear what you are—you will thereby pay measure for measure. Feel that you are a king, and act as lord over all. Endeavour to bend the nobles beneath your sceptre—they, in return, will teach the lower ranks submission, and in this protect them; for, of course, you must feel that you never can be greater than when every one else is far beneath you.—In short, that I may return to our former subject—when Clovis is no more, you may chuse a partner of your throne. I repeat that his blood was wanting in the scale of your fortune, and justice offers it.

Chi. Has he really deserved death?

Gri. Dost thou think thy father——?

Chi. You are the judge—consider that—you are the judge.

Gri. Enough! I shall bring the sentence to your private room for signature. [*Exit.*

Chi. I'll follow you.—Oh, how do I abhor this eagerness to shed the blood of unfortunate fellow-creatures! Even now I tremble at the thought of signing the sentence.—— Wretched, wretched is he, who is obliged to condemn, while he himself has reason to dread the condemnation of an all-knowing judge. [*Going.*

Enter BRUNO.

Bru. My liege!

Chi. What want you, Bruno?

Bru. Ada sends me. She wishes to converse with you for a few moments.

Chi. Ada!——Enough! Tell her I shall return immediately.—*(As he goes.)*—Was she alone when she sent you?

Bru. She looked fearfully around—I thought as if afraid of being perceived by the queen.

Chi. Was she melancholy?

Bru. She could scarcely refrain from tears.

Chi.—*(Aside.)*—What means this? Again as heretofore my heart beats at the mention of her name.—*(To* Bru.)—Tell her I shall soon be here. [*Exit.*

Enter ADA.

Ada.—*(Trembling.)*—Where is he?

Bru. He will return in a few minutes. He did not expect you so immediately.

Ada. I thank you, Bruno. Let me await his return, alone.—*(Exit* Bru.)—Oh God, who didst inspire me with these feelings, lend me thy aid. I will wrench the dagger from my mother's hand that vengeance may not overtake her.—Can such an act be wrong?—No. A voice within me declares it otherwise.—Oh Childebert, I feel that I could hazard far more.—Much as this step costs me, I could to save thee—yet, wretch that I am!——I may not declare what I feel—I may not hope.

Enter CHILDEBERT.

Chi. Ada already here! Is it in my power to serve you. Speak! Command.

Ada.—*(Confused, and for some time in vain attempting to speak.)*—Oh Heavens! [*Seats herself and hides her face.*

Chi. What means this?—I own that I have ever thought your looks dejected, but never was the sorrow of your heart so evident as now. Tell me, I beseech you, the cause of your distress.——You are silent.—Oh recal the picture of our childhood, when friendship bound us to each other, when hand in hand we passed whole days in careless pleasures. Had Ada then a thought which was not known by Childebert——and now suspicious, reserved towards him?—Unhappy change!

Ada. Alas!—Childebert became a king—and I—I was doomed to weep—

Chi. And to hate me.

Ada.—*(Starts.)*—Hate *you*, Childebert!——Oh pardon me—I was dreaming of our earlier years.

Chi.—*(Kneeling and with fervour.)*—Dream on, dream on, lovely Ada. Oh, am I the Childebert, whom formerly—

Ada. What mean you——*King?* Release me—let me go to my mother.

Chi. Pardon me. I forgot myself—forgot the curse of Heaven which rests upon me, and makes me in Ada's eyes detestable.——But Bruno told me that you wished to see me.

Ada.—*(Aside.)*—Oh that I durst speak of my father!—*(Aloud.)*—My mother requests you will permit her to have a conversation with Clovis in his prison.

Chi.—*(Starts, and is thoughtful for a few moments.)*—The queen's wishes are my laws. I will instruct an unknown but faithful man to be her guide.—*(Aside.)*—And that man shall be myself.

Ada. Will you allow me to accompany her?

Chi.—*(Embarrassed.)*—If.—*(Aside.)*—What means this? Ada wishes to see Clovis.—Happy man—happy even at the brink of the grave!

Ada. Oh Heavens! What say you?

Chi. I was—no—fear not, for ——why are you thus alarmed?

Ada. Childebert, if I might ask another favour—

Chi. What?—Ask any thing—every thing—what I would most willingly grant is—my life.—Oh speak!

Ada. Do not—do not solemnize your marriage with my mother—at least do not to-day—I conjure you by the joys and friendship of our earlier years—I cannot, dare not say more. [*Exit hastily.*

Chi. Never, never, never!———Oh that I were but allowed to see through the gloom which on every side surrounds me!—Can an innocent affection have crept into her bosom? Oh why.—*(Laying his hand on his heart.)*—Why do I flatter this poor fool with hopes? Would not Adelgunda long since extinguish every spark of affection for me, which she might observe in her bosom? I'll speak to her—my heart shall speak to her, and sure I am her heart cannot be silent. What anguish had I spared, what happiness had been my lot, if——Oh fool, fool that I was, to be dazzled by the arts and boundless ambition of my father!—I am now a victim incapable of breaking my chains

but by plunging into an abyss of infamy. —— Yes. Often have I thought that he who raises himself by artifice and villainy must support himself by the same disgraceful means, or sink lower than the rank, from which he rose.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

Scene.—*A subterraneous Dungeon.* Dagobert *is stretched on the Earth, and rests his Head upon a Stone.*

Dag. In vain!—*(Rises.)*—The regal dreams which incessantly torment me, make me the most wretched of mankind. They banish every ray of consolation from my mind. To fall from a throne to a prison is hard—harder than from a throne to the grave.—Happy is he, who has never been exalted by Fate, for the greatest of all misfortunes is the recollection of former prosperity.—*(The door opens.)*—Welcome, whoever thou art. Doubtless thou art the messenger of death.

Enter CLOVIS, *conducted by* BRUNO.

whom do I see? Clovis!

Clo. At your majesty's feet.

Dag.—*(Aside.)*—Inconsiderate man!

Bru. Majesty!

Dag. You see his senses are disordered.

Clo. That are they not.—Fear shall not urge me to deny my sovereign.—*(Takes* Bruno's *hand.)*—Man, if thou hast entirely sold thyself to the usurper, I will with a single word speak damnation to thy soul. Behold before thee DAGOBERT, King of the Franks.

Bru. Damned be the man, who would not die for him.—But on this my shoulder rested the bier, which held his remains. I well remember it was borne to the grave by eight knights. Every one groaned beneath the burden, for we bore to the grave the happiness and glory of a whole nation.

Dag. A treacherous deception of Grimbald did ye bear, while Dagobert was doomed to wander an exile from his country.—I am the shadow of thy former king.—Come nearer, Bruno, son of Mirald.

Bru. True, true! I recognize the features of my benefactor.—*(Sinks on his knees.)*—With what extacy does the sight of my monarch fill my heart!—But must I not be astonished at seeing you here? Must I not be alarmed when I know that you so soon must die.

Dag. Friend, this attitude is mockery to me. Rise and embrace the unfortunate Dagobert.

Clo. Bruno, if thou dost not feel proud of having embraced thy king, thou art not worthy that the sun should shine upon thee.

Bru. Proud I am, and ready to sacrifice my life in his service.—But few hours are your's. Grimbald commanded me to bring you both hither His terror and distrust made me certain some secret of consequence agitated him. He has accused you both as regicides, and orders are already given for your execution. The guard of the palace is doubled, and creatures devoted to him are stationed at the entrance of this prison. I fear the hour of Childebert's marriage will be your last.

Dag. Marriage! Marriage!

Bru. Did you not know that the nuptials of Childebert and Adelgunda were to be celebrated to-day?

Dag. Were—but now?

Bru. Adelgunda still thinks you dead. Your fate is unknown to her, for but half an hour since she spoke of this alliance, which she utterly abhors.

Dag. And yet submits to it?

Bru. Because she must.

Dag. Almost do I doubt thy honesty, for having said that word Who *must* do that, which he will not.

Clo. Perhaps some great design has caused this sudden resolution, for during the last ten years, sorrow has never left her cheek. She has lived in virtuous privacy.

Bru. Oh she is truly virtuous.

Dag. Ay, my friends—had you seen how this virtuous wife to-day clasped me in her arms, pressed me to her heart, swore eternal affection, then sunk, intoxicated with delight at seeing me, senseless into my arms.

Clo. You grow pale.

Bru. How! Did she recognize you?

Dag.—*(With terrific fury.)*—She did.

[*Falls into the arms of* Clovis.

Bru. Then all is lost. Oh virtue, if thou dost serve as a mask to vice and infamy, how shall we know thee?—I hasten to Gomar. I know his loyalty, and am sure he meditates your rescue. On him rest all our hopes. [*Exit.*

Clo. Your majesty is too much agitated. Repose here awhile. [*Places him on the stone.*

Dag. Repose amid this tempest of the soul.—Tell me, Clovis—is there in Hell a power, which does not exercise its spite against me?

Clo. The hand of Fate lies heavy on you, but Heaven never bestowed on man a firmer mind. The path of life is to you full of precipices—it is a track made by misfortune herself. None but a Dagobert could walk upon it.

Dag. Nor can I any longer. Oh Clovis, I am betrayed by her—by her, whose happiness I would have purchased

with my blood. Friend, grant me some little consolation if thou can'st. The blow has reached my very heart.

Enter an OFFICER.

Off. I give you both notice to prepare for death in half an hour. From respect towards you, Clovis, the execution will take place in this dungeon. This is the king's command. [*Exit.*

Dag. Clovis—you tremble.

Clo. With fury. The king's command! At the nod of a traitor falls Dagobert, King of the Franks.—Oh that my tongue could describe what is passing in my breast! Heaven, earth, and even hell would tremble at my words.

Dag. Why so violent?

Clo. Did you not hear it is the king's command—King Childebert's command—that you shall die?

Dag. I did, I did—but no more of that, Clovis, nature herself has made us dread the sight of death. How, therefore, can we help it? I own, when our execution was just now announced, a tremor crept through my frame. Even a valiant man is alarmed when an unseen friend strikes him on the shoulder from behind. He turns and embraces him. Thus it was with me. Death is my friend.

Clo. But the king commands your death.—Who are you?—Who commands?—Who can—who dares command?

Dag. Clovis, disturb me not with reflections like these. The few remaining moments of my life are of consequence to my soul. I stand on the brink of eternity—but a few steps from the presence of the All-Just.—Oh my soul, transport thyself thither.

[*Kneels, and reclines his head upon the stone.*

Clo. Oh providence, how wonderful and inscrutable to the mind of man are the ways, in which thou leadest us to our great last destiny.—Villainy triumphs in the fall of the good.

Dag.—*(Looks towards Heaven and seems much agitated.)* —Oh God!

Clo. What thus disturbs my monarch?

Dag. But one recollection. I was thinking of my child, whom, in the blossom of her youth, I leave to the care of her perfidious mother.—Alas, Clovis—my Ada!——Could I but once more see her! What rapture should I feel were I to find her virtuous.

Clo. Oh, by Heavens, I'll pledge my honour and my soul for the virtue of your daughter. Believe me she is worthy of her noble father. If nature were dissatisfied and sorrowful at the imperfections of other human beings, she needed but to look at Ada, and such a master-piece would console her for the defects of her other works. Never did external charms promise more inborn goodness, and never did the mind accord with appearances more than the mind of Ada. All the virtues have fled from the persecution of vice to her heart that their influence might be stronger under the protection of exalted innocence, and through the power of matchless beauty. Oh Dagobert, were I monarch of the world, my dominions would not be worth a wish—

Dag. Well, Clovis?—Why hesitate?—How thy cheek glows? Shall I conclude that thou hast spoken the sentiments of thy heart? Why are thine eyes cast upon the earth?

Clo. Gracious monarch, on my knees I implore your pardon and compassion.—How could I command my heart to remain insensible at the sight of perfection?—Be not incensed at this avowal, for by sacred truth I swear it never should have proceeded from my lips, if——But why this

gloomy look?—Oh that my tongue had denied its office ere I spoke!

Dag. Clovis, Clovis, thou dost bind my soul again to earthly objects.—The idea, which was once transporting, is now tormenting to me. What happy prospects cheered me, when in former days I beheld the opening charms and growing virtues of my Ada.—For thee, Clovis, for thee I destined her.

Clo. For me!—Oh inexpressible delight?—I worthy of Ada!—Death, thou canst not rob me of this blissful thought.

Enter ADELGUNDA *and* ADA, *conducted by* CHILDEBERT, *disguised as a Centinel, who remains unobserved at the Door.*

Dag. Ha! See, see! They come to glory in our fall.—Oh shameless creatures!

Clo. Heavens! What means this?

Adel.—*(Goes hastily with* Ada *towards* Dag.)—Beloved husband!—He avoids me.—Is contempt the reward of my affection?—Is the wife, who has so long mourned your absence, spurned from you? Oh impossible!—*(Following him.)*—My husband, my husband! Turn, turn, and come into my arms that I may press you to my heart.

Dag. Woman, I wish not to know thee. Thou art sent by Hell. Hence! Leave my soul in peace.—Friend, what a dreadful hour! Help me to bear this trial.

[*Reclines on the stone and takes* Clovis's *hand.*

Adel. Can I believe the testimony of my ears?—My husband, Adelgunda speaks to you.

Dag.—*(With averted face and looking at* Clovis.)—Yes. Such was the name of the viper, which once twined its folds around my heart. Oh, she seemed the emblem of fidelity

and virtue—deceived me for whole years with assumed affection, and imposed upon me by specious tenderness, while treachery inhabited her heart. She has now gained her end. To the husband whom she has betrayed and sold, dissimulation is no longer necessary.

Adel. Enough! I now will speak.

Dag. Be silent and begone. Pollute not my last breath. Perfidious wretch, thou hast sold me to Grimbald, and thyself to his son.—Away from me! Inward torture will embitter the enjoyment of thy sin, and the expectation of future punishment will fill thy soul with horror.—Away!—Oh that my prayers could save thy soul from the curse of the Eternal Judge!

Adel. Oh God! Thou seest what I am doomed to endure.—Why, why, my husband, do you allow your noble soul to be debased by anger founded on injustice? You are deaf to the vows of innocence and truth, as the furious tiger to the cries of the helpless traveller.——Oh Ada, in vain do I try to convince him of my innocence. He will not hear me.—Would that Gomar were here!

Ada. Father, you are cruel.—Listen to me, I beseech you.

Dag. Ada, come nearer.—Do you love me?

Ada.—(Embracing his knees.)—Oh my father, be not so cruel towards my mother.

Dag. Cruel!—She has betrayed me and herself.—No more, no more!—Again I ask——do you love me?

Ada. Heaven be my witness that I do. May it deny me mercy, if I ever harboured any thought respecting you, which was not dictated by duty and affection.——But my poor mother—

Dag. Would you love the man too, who would rescue your father?

Ada. I should love him and revere him as a saint.

Dag. Good child!—And if this worthy man, by endeavouring to save me, were to fall with me—?

Ada. Oh my father, then would compassion—but see—how distressed is my mother!

Dag. Yes, that is your mother, but this is the man, of whom I spoke.

Ada. Clovis!—How shall I thank you, worthy man?

Clo. By thinking me—by thinking me worthy of King Dagobert's friendship. Even the death which awaits me is a reward; for I know that I bear to the grave the favour of my sovereign.

Dag.—*(Looks at him with a smile—after a pause.)*—Oh omnipresent God, graciously look down upon us.——Ada, give me your hand, and if your father be as dear to you as you have declared, swear to me by my blood, which will soon flow upon the place where you now stand, swear to me by your soul, and all your hopes of salvation that you will fulfill my last wish.

Ada. Every thing, my father, any thing.

Dag. Swear, then.

Ada. I do swear.—Alas, my poor mother!

Dag. Will you not listen to me?

Ada. I obey.

Dag. 'Tis well. Hear then my heart's last wish. I have lived to see that there is not a Frank deserving of my daughter's hand, except one upright faithful man. That only man is Clovis.—Give him your hand, and in the presence of the all-seeing Judge vow to be faithful to him for ever—vow never to become the wife of another, but to pass your days in holy retirement.

Ada. My father!—

Dag. Ha! Thou dost withdraw thy trembling hand from mine.

Ada. Oh my mother, my mother!

Dag. Ada, thy father is here.

Ada.—*(Falls at his feet.)*—Pardon—be not incensed—I obey.

Chi.—*(Who has hitherto stood unseen at the entrance of the prison, and by his mien has betrayed the various emotions produced by the above conversation, approaches.)*—Hold.

Dag. Who spoke that word?

Adel. Oh, we are betrayed.

Ada.—*(Sinking into her mother's arms.)*—Heavens! That voice—

Dag. Who art thou? Approach.—If that monster thy king sent thee hither to listen, I will discover more to thee—I will discover what thy slavish tongue will not dare to repeat.

Chi.—*(Takes off his helmet.)*—'Tis I.

Clo. He himself!

Adel. He has imposed upon us.

Ada. Oh my mother, hide me.

Dag. Clovis, you see they have combined with him to mock our wretchedness.—Infamous, infamous!

Clo. Traitor, how canst thou thus boldly endure the look of Dagobert?

Chi.—*(To.* Dag.)—I followed the queen hither unperceived. Thanks to Heaven, which inspired me with the resolution. But I perceive this is not a proper time for the disclosure of my sentiments. I leave you.—Queen!

Adel. Whither would you lead me?—No. I am but a weak woman, despised and hated by my husband, but nothing shall again parts us. Too long has treachery robbed me of him. I find him in a dungeon. Affection and duty bind me to the place where he is. No throne is so attractive to me as this prison. Go thou to thy palace, and glory in the possession of the crown, which thou hast stolen; but

woe be on thy head, if thy power cannot annihilate Hell, or thy treasures bribe thy conscience.

Dag. Friend, if these words proceeded from her heart.—

Enter GRIMBALD *and* SOLDIERS.

Gri.—*(Astonished at seeing the Queen.)*—Ha!—Who has dared to enter this prison?—Queen, who brought you hither?

Chi.—*(Comes forward.)*—I myself.—Father, look there, and be astonished. The man, whom you mistook for an assassin is Dagobert.

Gri. Thou here too! Thou among those, who have conspired against thyself and me!—Weak fool, tremble.—Dagobert! Where is he?—Does that wretch assume his name?—Admirably managed, truly! This Dagobert, then, has started from his grave to-day, in order to commit a crime, which every one knows must be punished with death.—Let me look at him.—In truth nature formed him for this deception.—Such impostors have appeared in every age.—But you, Adelgunda and Clovis, ought to be ashamed of endeavouring to conceal your treachery by so paltry an artifice.

Clo. Unparalleled effrontery! Oh that this arm were free!

Dag. Friend, be great and noble. Confide in the justice of Heaven, and despise the villain, if you cannot pity him.

Gri. No more of this audacious imposition. King, I came hither to witness the execution of the sentence you have signed.—*(To the Soldiers.)*—Come nearer. Those are the criminals. Do your duty.

Adel.—*(To the Soldiers.)*—Hold, barbarians! On me fall your swords!

Ada.—(*To* Gri.)—Oh be merciful.

Dag.—(*Steps forward with undaunted mien.*)—Here is Dagobert, your lawful king. Plunge your swords into my heart, and raise them stained with blood towards Heaven. There will I implore pardon for you, and a blessing on my ungrateful subjects, though every drop of royal blood cry aloud for vengeance.—No more delay!—See you not that your tyrant is enraged?—Here is my breast. Turn away, if you cannot bear the sight. I myself will guide the points of your swords. But spare my friend. He has not been betrayed and dethroned. Why must he die?

Clo. Great noble Dagobert, think me not unworthy of falling at your side.

Gri. Damnation!—Men, obey my orders.

Adel. Oh rather murder me.

Ada. Heavens!

Chi. Let no one dare to proceed.—Back, soldiers.

Adel. Villain, whom dost thou wish to murder? Can regicide be wanting to fill the measure of thy crimes? No. Thou hast already committed more than can be atoned for by an eternity of punishment.—And you, soldiers, who are you? Are you Franks? Can Franks sell themselves to a tyrant? Would you murder your lawful sovereign—Dagobert, whom you once revered—whom you have seen fighting and bleeding for his country? What has he done to you? Did he ever oppress you, or deprive you of your rights? Oh, if your noble fathers could behold you from their graves, the perfidy of their children would destroy their repose. Never, never did a Frank stain his sword with the blood of his monarch. [*The soldiers throw their swords away.*

Gri.—(*Aside.*)—By Heaven this woman's whining rhetoric alarms their coward hearts.—Adelgunda, I beg you will leave this place.

Adel. Sooner will I lose my life, and renounce my hatred against thee, traitor.

Gri. By all the powers of Hell, this is too much. You have entered into a confederacy with this impostor, and your crime makes you subject to my orders. I command you to withdraw.—*(To the Sol.)*—Ye cowards, if your lives be dear to you—if you do not wish to be punished as confederates in this plot, drag her away.—*(The Sol. again take their swords.)*—Queen, I beg you will not oblige me to use force. It would hurt me to deviate from the respect I feel towards you as the widow of my beloved friend and monarch.—Go to the palace.

Adel. That thou may'st commit murder uninterrupted.

Gri. Be at ease on that account. An impostor like this, who has attempted to deceive a whole nation, ought to die in the presence of a whole nation. The prisoners shall be publicly executed. Soldiers, attend the queen to her apartment.

Adel.—*(Apart to* Ada.)—Let us hasten to save him. Gomar stays too long.—Dagobert, may Heaven acknowledge thy virtues, though thou hast refused to acknowledge the fidelity of thy wife!—*(To* Gri.)—Tyrant, hear me. An impostor who has deceived a whole nation ought to die in the presence of a whole nation. Let this sentence be executed on whom it may—it is just, and believe me every thing which is just in the eyes of our Judge above—will be fulfilled. [*Exeunt* Adel. *and* Ada, *attended by Sol.*

Gri.—*(Aside.)*—Ha!—Now will she hasten to obtain assistance—but her intentions shall be frustrated.—*(To* Chi.)—Her crimes make her unworthy of your hand. She must be tried by the council of bishops. She is a reptile which knaws on the happiness of your majesty and the peace of the empire.—Leave this impostor to my care. My office makes me his judge—*(Goes to* Dag.)—Wretch, curse the moment

when thou wert persuaded by thy evil genius to direct thy steps hither. Thy doom is fixed.——Come, King.

[*Exeunt* Gri. *and* Chi.

Dag. Go. Thou art unworthy of my indignation,—Friend, what means this gloomy look? Why stand you thus stupified and speechless!—Clovis, Clovis, what means this?

Clo. Ha! Ha! Ha! Yes, dream of judges and of Hell, ye fools.

Dag. Horrible!—What say you, my son?

Clo. Son!—Oh torment! Did I not see her look with scorn at me—with tenderness at Childebert?

Dag. At Childebert!

Clo. Did you not perceive it?—Well, as you please. She did not look at Childebert.—I am cured—and know you by what means? A grim infernal monster has devoured my heart. I have no longer any heart or blood. Clovis is no more.

Dag. How! Has Clovis no heart for his friend Dagobert?

[Clo. *gazes at him—and is silent.*

Enter GOMAR *and* BRUNO.

Dag. Welcome, friends. Whom seek you?

Gom. Our king, and with him death.

Dag. 'Tis well. Death and Dagobert are nearly allied. Oh rise. Be not ashamed of embracing me.

Clo. Gomar—no rescue—no revenge?

Gom. Die, friend, unless you would live among slaves. On my soul I would not save you were it in my power. The Franks are a degenerate race. The great spirit of our fathers is extinguished. It were idle folly to expect a noble act from a nation, which has submitted to the yoke of a ty-

rannical usurper.—It is a disgrace—oh that I am obliged to say so—it is a disgrace to be a Frank.

Dag. Speak not in such terms of my people, I beseech you. I love them still.

Gom. Then let me be silent.

Dag. No. Proceed.

Gom. I went in search of the noblest and bravest Franks whom I knew—the valiant Osmar, the stern Ragond and their friends. To them I related your fortunes and return. They laughed at me, and treated me as if I were insane. I then produced this writing of the Queen, after perusing which, they stood gazing at each other in mute astonishment.

Dag. Let me see that writing.

Gom.—(Presents the parchment.)—The Queen some hours ago commanded me to lay it before the nobles of the realm.

Dag.—(Reads.)—" Ye faithful nobles, let your hearts be open to the tears and complaints of the forsaken Adelgunda. She implores your assistance in behalf of King Dagobert. The invisible servants of the all-just God have brought him from the Desarts of Ireland, to which the faithless Grimbald banished him ten years ago. In the deepest dungeon of the castle he expects immediate death from the hands of the traitor. The valiant Clovis is a witness and sharer of his wretched fate. 'Till now he remains unknown to his foes, and is condemned to die for having stabbed the villain Clodomir. I myself will pave the way to his release. Childebert believes he will this day obtain my hand, but at the altar and in your presence will I plunge a poinard in his breast, that Heaven may see how sacred was the vow of constancy which I pledged to Dagobert.

" ADELGUNDA."

(Kisses her name.)—Good angels, bear this kiss to her. Oh faithful Adelgunda forgive my suspicions.—Friend, we have wronged her much. Deceived by appearances, I was

deaf to her sincere protestations.—Well, Gomar, what said they, when they had perused this?

Gom. Awhile they stood in silent wonder, till Osmar said: "Were Dagobert alive, he would have disclosed it to his friends, or have come with a foreign army to oppose his enemies Who can be sure that even the Queen herself is not deceived?"

Dag. The cowardly slave!

Gom. Conversation of this nature occupied some time, 'till Bruno came, dispatched by the Queen to apprize us of your immediate danger.

Dag. And when you left the assembly?

Gom. "Let us but see him," said they, "and he shall find that he has friends."

Dag. Enough! They shall see him. My soul burns with eagerness.—*(Throws off his pilgrim's habit.)*—Friends, know you this armour?—Why thus astonished?

Bru. Oh, what Frank does not know it?

Gom. You wore it when you vanquished Clotham.

Dag. Ay, and I wore it on the day that I was proclaimed King of the Franks.—I wore it too when Grimbald's hirelings dragged me from my country. Wilfried clasped it with a blessing when I left Ireland.—Friends, let us embrace each other—perhaps for the last time. Gomar, give me thy sword and thy hand.—Clovis, take thou Bruno's sword and hand.—Now follow me.

Gom. I understand you well. Take not my sword, but let me be your shield.

Dag. Friend, if I be doomed to fall, I'll fall as the defender of my faithful subjects, the last duty which, as a King, I wish to fulfil.

Clo. Oh my liege, let me on my knees, perhaps for the last time—

Gom. Do not despise my fidelity—

Bru. Nor my tears — — [*All kneel.*

Dag. My friends, my friends!—Almighty God, if thou callest me to thee, protect these worthy men, that they may be the defenders of virtue, and their native land.—What a sight!—*(Bends towards the earth.)*—In God we trust.—Now come.

Bru. Alas, you face inevitable death. A hundred centinels guard this prison.

Clo. Let thousands guard it. The appearance of so good and great a King will inspire each man with reverential awe.

Dag. If slaves oppose us, be not afraid, for they have no courage—if valiant men, they must be noble and will, therefore be our friends. Follow me. I am still a king.

[*Takes* Gomar's *sword and exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT. V.

Scene.—*A Saloon in the Palace. Enter* GRIMBALD *hastily, accompanied by Soldiers.*

Gri. Well, men, do you thoroughly understand me?

Sol. We do. [*They produce daggers.*

Gri. Right. I rely on you. If you value your own fortunes, you will minutely follow my directions.—After you have done the deed, mingle with the multitude. I pledge to you my word that you shall be rewarded beyond your expectations—and what risk do you run? See, there is my son the King with two thousand Franks, and I shall station myself in another part of the city with a thousand steady veterans.—Unless an angel fight for them, in half an hour the accursed race shall be extinct. The woman, who has dared to oppose my power shall give notice to Hell of its approaching booty.——Take your stations. She comes.

Enter ADELGUNDA *and* ADA.

Adelgunda, you see the consequences of your rash conduct. Your life is in imminent danger. The people curse you, and require that you shall be sacrificed to their fury. How absurd was it by such conduct to make yourself unworthy a monarch's hand!

Adel. How has Heaven debased me by giving a Grimbald power to address me thus.

Gri. I should address you otherwise, were I to speak as you deserve.—The people say you bribed the guards that the escape of the traitor might make it more difficult to prove the falsehood of your infamous assertions. Indeed, by what other means could they escape?

Adel. They have escaped then?

Gri. No. Their hour is come. By Heaven, their death is as certain as their crime.—Osmar, Ragond, Gomar, and about four hundred more have joined the pretender. They have taken refuge in the house of Clovis from the indignation of the populace—but look—there stands King Childebert with three thousand men, and two thousand more are ready to follow me against this impostor. You may remain here, and await the account of his death. I have appointed these men to protect you, since it is evident that the people thirst for your blood. Farewell.—*(To the Sol.)*—Keep a watchful eye upon both of them, and when you hear my command from a distance, act as I have directed.

Adel. Stay, stay, Grimbald. Hear me. Must all the insurgents die—all?

Gri. By Heaven they must and shall.

Adel. How weak am I, that I cannot execute so good a deed!—Grimbald, you are right. Every villain ought to perish.—*(Suddenly draws a dagger from her bosom.)*—Condemned of Heaven, die.

Ada.—*(Holds her arm.)*—Oh my mother!—

[Adel. *retreats and covers her face with both hands.*

Gri. Ha, traitress! This was thy last attempt.—Did you see this, men?—Woman, the avenger's hand is stretched forth to punish thee. I go to exterminate thy adherents. If thou would'st curse—curse Heaven for having given thee being—if thou would'st pray—pray to Hell that it may swallow thee.—*(To the Sol.)*—Once more—remember my commands. [*Exit.*

Adel. No longer, then, does Heaven preside over the human race. Triumphant villainy has bound the Judge's arm.—Why did my hand tremble? Why did my soul revolt at the idea of murder? Will Grimbald tremble too? Alas, no.—(*To* Ada.)—Who will ward the blow aimed at thy father?

Ada. Heaven will protect him.

Adel. Foolish girl! What cares Heaven for the fate of man?—I too once hoped for its aid, but that hope I now no longer cherish.—Oh they will murder him and thou, poor child, wilt lose at one blow a father and a mother.

Ada. Horrible! Dear mother, that very thought would kill me, did not Hope animate my heart.

Adel. Do not deceive thyself, Ada. Rather expect the worst—then will the stroke be less severe.——Hark! What shout was that—what a tremor courses through my veins!—Oh God, forgive me, if I have murmured against thy Providence.—Yes—still do I feel consolation by relying on thy goodness.—Ha! See, the people are in motion.

Ada. Oh my father, surely thou wilt not condemn the affection of thy daughter, if it be the means of thy deliverance.

Adel. See!—There goes a small band of warriors.—'Tis he, 'tis he.—'Tis Dagobert, who leads them. How proudly does he march in the very armour which he wore upon the day of our marriage.—Oh how dreadfully his sword glitters in the air.——And see, Childebert approach him.

Ada. Heavens! Should he have imposed upon my unsuspecting heart—

Adel. Gracious God! May I believe my eyes, Childebert falls at his feet.

Ada. At his feet?—Oh! [*Swoons.*

Adel. Ada! Why this deadly paleness? Feels she so much

for her father's foe? Can her heart—Ada, hear me. He sunk on his knee, as if he meant to intreat forgiveness.

Ada. Forgiveness!—Oh yes, he deserves to be forgiven.—I too, my mother.—*(Kneels.)*—I too deserve to be forgiven.—His heart is devoid of guilt. He swore by his affection for me that he would save my father.

Adel. Unhappy girl, could'st thou confide in a man sprung from the villain Grimbald?

Ada. I confide in Heaven, in human nature, and in love.

Adel. Oh may thy innocence find mercy in the eyes of God!—But fearful presages overpower my soul.—Do I not hear the name of Dagobert?—Yes, yes, it is the shout of victory. Oh, I must fly to meet him. To me—to his wife belongs his first——

[*As she is going two of the soldiers detain her.*

Sol. Hold!

Adel. Slaves, dare you—

[*A shout of* victory! victory! *is heard.*

Sol. Now die.—*(A soldier stabs the Queen, and while two others are rushing towards the Princess,* Bruno *enters and intercepts their passage.)*—

Bru. Unparalleled villainy!

Adel. Oh Bruno—blood—blood.—

[*Falls to the earth. The soldiers escape.*

Bru. Help! Help! [*Raises her.*

Ada. Oh my mother! Alas! Where shall I seek help?

Bru. Gracious queen!

Adel. I thank thee, Bruno; my husband and I shall now be united in death.

Bru. No, no. Virtue is triumphant; Dagobert, King of the Franks, lives beloved by his subjects.

Adel. Say'st thou so?—Oh, I no longer feel my wound. Conduct me to him.

Bru. Wait 'till we obtain some assistance.

Adel. From thy words I shall be best assisted. Tell me, tell me all.

Bru. The noble Dagobert, full of reliance on his courage and the goodness of his cause, boldly left his prison, followed by Clovis, Gomar and myself. At sight of him the centinels fled, like the damned when an angel appears to them. Thus we reached Osmar, at whose house our monarch's friends were assembled. Grimbald summoned his followers, and the people attached themselves to him and Childebert. He threatened to burn the house unless we would instantly surrender. Clovis incensed beyond all bounds rushed against him and—Grimbald fell. Our forces were four hundred men, who had to contend against as many thousands. Dagobert led us towards Childebert. Ere we approached him, several fell and exclaimed: 'Tis he. 'Tis he—and now, Childebert himself sunk on his knee. "Franks," cried he to his followers, "acknowledge your King. There is Dagobert." Instantly the air was filled with a shout of "Long live King Dagobert!"

Adel. Oh Bruno, how hast thou transported me! Come, come. I need no assistance. I feel no wound. Were death already creeping through every vein, it could not reach my heart, for ecstacy would bar its progress.

[*Exit, supported by* Bru. *and* Ada.

SCENE.

A spacious Square. Dagobert, Gomar, Ragond, Osmar *and other Knights are discovered, surrounded by the populace.*

Dag. Yes, my friends and much loved subjects, thus did your monarch drag on a wretched existence, condemned at home, and despised abroad. But dreadful as was my fate, I knew no greater sorrow than when I thought of you—than when I reflected that you groaned beneath the yoke of tyranny, and had no protector of your honour, no defender of your rights. Oh believe me, your fate lay heavier on my heart than my own. I murmured not against the will of Providence. I prayed not that my miseries might have an end, but that my subjects might be happy. "Oh God" said I in many a bitter hour, "spare, spare my people, and let thy hand be stretched forth against me alone. If ever I found favour in thy sight listen to my prayer, and bless my subjects whom I love more than myself."—My sufferings are now at an end—and now too shall this same supplication be daily addressed to the dispenser of every blessing.

Gom. Oh ye nations of the earth, be no longer proud of your Kings, when they sell your blood to purchase laurels. The Franks alone are happy, governed by their father Dagobert.

All. Long live King Dagobert.

Enter CLOVIS.

Clo.—*(Kneeling.)*—Long live my King! May Heaven reward his virtues!—Then must he be the happiest of mankind.

Dag.—*(Raising him.)*—Friend, where have you been?—You are much agitated—pale—in tears too.

Clo. I have witnessed a most dreadful scene.—I was conducting the herald, who proclaimed through the city the restoration of King Dagobert, when I came to the place where I slew Grimbald. He was still stretched upon the earth, and his weeping son leaned over him. I stopped,—for the youth's sorrow affected me deeply—when the mob rushed forward, tore the corps piecemeal, scattered the mangled limbs, and with frantic fury raised their bloody hands. In vain did I call to them. Their phrenzy knew no bounds. Childebert sunk to the earth, raised his eyes towards Heaven, then rivetted them upon me. I took him in my arms—but he tore himself from my grasp, and rushed towards the palace.

Dag. Horrible, horrible! Triumph not, Oh villain, in the enjoyment of thy crimes. The delay of punishment doubles its severity. But where are my wife and child? Why must my eagerness to clasp them in my arms be so long ungratified?

Gom. I hasten to them.

Dag. Right, Gomar.—*(Exit* Gom.)—Alas, my friends, should such a happy day——Hope sweetened my late sufferings, and now fear embitters my happiness.—*(A cry of* "Oh she is dying, she is dying" *is heard.)*—What cry of horror is that? Who is dying?

Enter ADELGUNDA, *supported by* ADA *and* BRUNO, *followed by* GOMAR, *and a crowd.*

Alas! My Queen! My Adelgunda!

Adel. Dagobert!—*(Releases herself and rushes a few steps towards him, but sinks back into the arms of* Gom. *and* Bru.)

Ada. My father!—*(Flies into his arms.)*—Oh, my mother!

Bru. This was Grimbald's last act of cruelty.

Dag. Barbarian that he was!—My wife, my Adelgunda! Is this the day that I so long have wished for?—Friends, friends, I feel I shall sink under this calamity.—What is my being, but the sensation of agony?—What tears have I shed at moments, when my sorrow was far less—yet now, I cannot weep.—Yet——Oh God, I do not complain—but ——the trial is severe. [*Sinks into the arms of* Clovis.

Clo. Oh that I could plunge my sword into the murderer's heart again!

Gom. The queen revives.

Adel. Dagobert!

Dag. My love!

Ada. Mother!

Adel. Blest am I, that my hand will grow cold while clasped by thine—that when I am dead, a tear will trickle from thy cheek upon mine.—Banish sorrow from thy breast —yet still remember me.—Dagobert, reward thy friends—reward Childebert too. His heart is virtuous, for he love the virtues of our daughter.—Make Ada happy—for she

loves him—make her as happy as my father made me, when he united me to Dagobert.

Ada. Oh! my father, if my heart be culpable, let me know it by one angry look. Then will I fly, weep in retirement to the end of my life, and wash away my error with my tears.

Dag. Rise, my daughter. Thy mother has said enough for thee.—But—Clovis—

Clo. Heaven grant me strength!—My liege,—you see that Ada's heart gives Childebert the strongest claim to her hand.—Accept him as your son. He is not unworthy of the honour. By the wishes of the Queen I conjure you to accept him, that the world may forget his first father.

Dag. Friend, thou art greater than thy King, for whom thou wouldst have died.—See! Her eye breaks, and death quivers on her lips. [*Falls on* Adelgunda's *bosom.*

Adel. Where is Ada?—Thy hand too—I feel—oh—Dagobert—Ada—fare—well. [*Dies.*

Dag. Oh my Adelgunda!

Ada. Beloved mother!

Gom. What a dreadful hour!

Dag.—(*Remains some time with his arms round* Adel. *while* Ada. *kneels at her side. He now resolutely walks forward.*)—'Tis done.—She has executed the hardest task of human nature.—Break not, my heart. Keep thy sorrows closely lodged, lest the air should dissipate them.——Come, my friends. I want your presence on another occasion of material consequence.

Enter CHILDEBERT, *in an humble dress, and unarmed, accompanied by two Knights, one of whom bears a crown, the other a sceptre.*

Chi. King of the Franks, dare a wretched outcast address you?

Dag. My friend Childebert, speak.

Chi. Hear me, ye nobles of the realm, and ye, whom I dare not call my brethren, hear me.—False ambition has misled me. It has dazzled my heart, but, believe me, not corrupted it. I was guiltless of your monarch's banishment. Like you, I was deceived by assurances of his death. I was but sixteen years of age, when my father hailed me King. Flatterers and slaves surrounded me,—they directed my thoughts, my words, my actions as their villainy suggested. I wavered between virtue and vice, though never undecided in my choice—but when my inclination and conviction drew me towards virtue, compulsion and the arts of those, who were acquainted with my weaknesses led me again to the path of vice. The return and condemnation of Dagobert were unknown to me. As soon as I recognized him, my heart revered him.—You saw I was the first, who knelt and called him King.—I am not ashamed—of appearing before you—in this slavish habit—as a criminal. My father's crimes are punished, and——

[*Sinks speechless into the arms of a soldier.*

Dag. What is this?—Friend!—Childebert!

Chi. Oh my sovereign—I intreat one favour—let me go.——I cannot bear this scene.—(*Pointing to the Queen and* Ada.)—Oh! How agonizing!

Dag. Friend, you have made ample amends for your late error by acting so nobly towards me. Give me your hand in the presence of this assembly.

Chi. Oh lead me away.—The consciousness of my error makes your kindness a most painful punishment.—There noble blood bears testimony against my blood. Virtue teaches me to curse the deed, while nature compels me to mourn for the perpetrator of it. [*Exit.*

Dag. Daughter, follow him, console him, and if on such a day, a cheerful thought can find a place in your mind, speak to him of the happiness, which awaits you both.—We will to the temple of that Deity, who ordained that we should live to see this awful day. I will return my crown into the hands of the Franks. Accumulated sorrows have made the burden too heavy for me. To-day I have drank the last drop of the cup of misery, which will embitter my remaining days. Yet will I be a father to my people. My counsels shall be united to the monarch's power, and from this union, with Heaven's assistance shall our native land find happiness and peace.

THE END.

Printed by J. Cundee, Ivy Lane.